

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Morehead.

SENATOR MOREHEAD: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, the proponents of this particular piece of legislation have indicated that there is no opposition to it, and, in fact, there is opposition to it. Some of that opposition may be resolved between now and the time that this legislation is dealt with again. But I feel that it is my duty in representing the people that are out there opposed to the bill to at least read into the record a letter which is in my possession. Some of the reasons that these people are in opposition indicate that, one, there are already four colleges and universities in the Omaha area offering general academic education, UNO, which is another state supported institution; the College of St. Mary, Creighton, Bellevue College. They feel that a fifth one is unnecessary and duplicative. Their second reason is that the establishment of a new program would be costly to taxpayers, including property taxpayers most specifically. If new enrollments at Fort Omaha would be large, there would be a large cost. The average cost per student at Metro Tech is nearly \$4000 a year. If enrollments are small, there is no need for the program. Potential lower tuition income at UNO must also be considered one of the fiscal impacts of this bill. Previous legislators have looked at the purpose of this bill and have defeated it. In 1981 the Legislature voted 26 to 12 to delete from a more comprehensive bill the establishment of an academic transfer program at Fort Omaha. Now I understand there is a little trouble with some of these statistics that need to be rectified here. Another reason that they indicate is the passage of this bill would set a bad precedent and could lead to academic transfer programs at the other campuses. Granted, they are saying academic transfer at only the one campus for Metro Tech, but if the one campus has it, again, the other campuses want it. The Legislature has wisely permitted academic transfer programs at technical community colleges only at campuses which were former junior colleges and that decision should stand. If there is concern about access and affordability for students who might be served by the Fort Omaha Campus, financial aid programs to help students go to existing colleges and